

CHARLIE BAKER
Governor



KARYN POLITO
Lt. Governor

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Governor Baker Makes Nominations to Probate and Family Court and Natick District Court

BOSTON – Today, Governor Charlie Baker nominated Attorneys Susan Sard Tierney to the Probate and Family Court and John F. Coffey to the Natick District Court. Tierney has 30 years of experience working for private firms in family law matters and Coffey has been a sole practitioner since 1995 with 23 years of prior experience in the public sector.

“Attorneys Susan Tierney and John Coffey are highly qualified and have over sixty years of combined experience serving in the probate and family and district courts, respectfully, **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “I am confident, should they be confirmed, that their knowledge of the law, wisdom and temperament will serve the Commonwealth and their respective courts well.”

“I am pleased with the nomination of these two experienced attorneys,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. “If confirmed, the Probate Family Court and District Court will benefit greatly from Attorney Tierney’s and Coffey’s experience, commitment and skill.”

The Probate and Family Court Department has jurisdiction over family-related and probate matters such as divorce, paternity, child support, custody, parenting time, adoption, termination of parental rights, abuse prevention and wills, estates, trusts, guardianships, conservatorships, and changes of name.

For more information on the Probate & Family Court, visit: <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/trial-court/pfc/>

Judicial nominations are subject to the advice and consent of the Governor’s Council. Applicants for judicial openings are reviewed by the Judicial Nominating Commission (JNC) and

recommended to the governor. Governor Baker established the JNC in February, 2015 pursuant to Executive Order 558, a non-partisan, non-political Commission composed of volunteers from a cross-section of the Commonwealth's diverse population to screen judicial applications. Twenty-one members were later appointed to the JNC in April, 2015.

The District Court hears a wide range of criminal, civil, housing, juvenile, mental health, and other types of cases. District Court criminal jurisdiction extends to all felonies punishable by a sentence up to five years, and many other specific felonies with greater potential penalties; all misdemeanors; and all violations of city and town ordinances and by-laws. In civil matters, District Court judges conduct both jury and jury-waived trials, and determine with finality any matter in which the likelihood of recovery does not exceed \$25,000. The District Court also tries small claims involving up to \$7,000 (initially tried to a magistrate, with a defense right of appeal either to a judge or to a jury). The District Court's civil jurisdiction also includes many specialized proceedings, including abuse prevention restraining orders and civil motor vehicle infractions (tried initially to a magistrate, with right of appeal to a judge).

For more information about the District Court, visit <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/trial-court/dc/>

About Susan Sard Tierney

Susan Sard Tierney currently works as an associate at the law firm Dunning, Kirrane, McNichols & Garner, LLP. She represents clients in all types of family law matters, including divorce, custody, abuse prevention orders, guardianships of minors, grandparents' visitation, and adoption. She is a Court-appointed Guardian ad Litem and a trained mediator. Prior to this, Ms. Tierney represented low-income clients as a staff attorney at South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. and New Hampshire Legal Assistance. She was also a law clerk to United States District Court Judge Shane Devine in New Hampshire. Ms. Tierney graduated from Brown University in 1981 with an A.B., Magna Cum Laude, in Political Science, and received her J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law in 1985. She resides in West Yarmouth.

About John F. Coffey

John F. Coffey has been a sole practitioner with an emphasis on criminal defense and civil litigation since 1995. Prior to that, Mr. Coffey served as an Assistant District Attorney at the Suffolk County District Attorney Office where he managed a caseload of thirty to forty felony cases and supervised narcotics trafficking investigations, including electronic surveillance and wiretaps. He has also served as a Special Assistant District Attorney for the Plymouth and Bristol County District Attorney Offices. In 1992, Mr. Coffey was appointed as a Special United States Attorney to work on a joint state and federal narcotics investigation named "Georgia Peach" that resulted in the indictment and conviction of several high-level cocaine traffickers who were operating and distributing cocaine in Boston. Mr. Coffey graduated from Boston College in 1981 with a B.S. in Marketing, received his J.D. from New England School of Law in

1986, and in 1995 he attended Boston University School of Law part time taking classes towards his L.L.M. in Taxation. He resides with his family in Needham.

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